4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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may traverse the camps of belligerents with greater safety than men. The terms of treaties of peace, too, are often discussed by the women belonging to the hostile parties in the privacy of the harems of the chieftains. More ready, however, as a rule, are they to espouse and take part in the quarrels of their male relatives than to act as peacemakers, and, owing to their practice of carrying arms, they are always ready for a fray. Miss Mackenzie relates that, when traversing the Pass of Katchanik, her attention was directed by her escort to two Albanian women whom they chanced to meet. "Look at them," he cried, "they are women worth looking at, for well do they know how to handle a gun!"

"Are they Moslems?" asked the traveller.

"Assuredly."

"But they do not wear the yashmak."

"Not they, indeed," was the reply. "They have never worn it, and why should they? for they are fiercer and more unapproachable than men."[1]

Such being the character of the Albanian women, it is not surprising that they have played a considerable part in the history of their country. It was, indeed, to the indomitable energy and courageous spirit of his mother, Khamko, that Ali Pasha, the "Lion of Ioannina," owed the earlier successes that paved the way for his subsequent brilliant career. Ali, who had during his father's lifetime been a wild and intractable boy, appears at his death to have submitted with the utmost docility to the authority of his mother. This lady, who was the daughter of a

[1] *Through Macedonia to the Albanian Lakes.*

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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Bey of Konitza, and connected with some of the best Toak families, had not, until the death of her husband placed the responsibility for the well-being of the family in her hands, given any signs of the extraordinary strength of character and readiness of resource which afterwards distinguished her, qualities which were, however, sullied by an implacability of soul which only too nearly resembled that displayed by Olympias, the mother of Alexander, herself a native of Epirus.

"To my mother," said the tyrant of Ioannina on one occasion to the French Consul-General—"to my mother I owe everything, for my father left me but a mere hole (τρίνα) and a few fields. My imagination, fired by the counsels of her who had twice given me birth—for she has made me both a *man* and a *vizier*—revealed to me the secret of my destiny."[1] The hereditary enemies of the family having at once taken advantage of its head being a minor, by seizing upon some of his lands, Khamko suddenly exchanged the distaff for the sword, and gathering round her the partisans of her house, and those among her late husband's vassals who still remained faithful, tried in various skirmishes her strength against that of the enemies of her family. In these raids she was accompanied by her young son, to whom she pointed out the lands of which he had been despoiled, and the estates of the despoilers. Braving every danger, the *Aghadina*, as Khamko was called by her followers, continued to harass her enemies by open hostility or secret intrigue until she was finally taken in an

[1] See pp. 245 and 319, *Fate*.

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159 175 562 628 ambuscade by the men of Gardiki and Tchormovo, together with Ali and her only daughter, Shainitza. After having been subjected to every indignity and outrage by their captors, Khamko and her children had the good fortune to be ransomed by the generosity of a Greek merchant for the sum of 22,800 piastres (£3700).

Hatred of those who had thus humiliated her took entire possession of the Aghadina's soul, and her one idea thenceforward was to train up her son as the avenger of her wrongs. With this object she commenced to instil into his mind those pernicious principles which he was only too well disposed to receive, and which may be summed up in the words [577] *Might is right*, an adage sufficiently popular among the turbulent Albanian clans. Ali's first attempt to vindicate his rights in the field was a complete failure. Having met with a more vigorous resistance than he expected, he fled from the fight, and was one of the first to re-enter Tepeleni. Khamko, furious at finding all her hopes blasted by what she deemed his cowardice, loaded him with reproaches, and thrusting her distaff into his hand, added, "Go, coward, and spin with the women in the harem; thou art fitter for that than for the career of arms!" Ali's fortunes indeed fluctuated for some time between success and failure. While he was absent on a campaign, Khamko found herself on her death-bed, and, though repeated and urgent messages were despatched to him, she died before he could arrive. The Aghadina in her will bequeathed to her son and daughter the task of immolating to her *manes* the inhabitants of Gardiki and [789] Tchormovo, at whose hands they had suffered such

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unpardonable indignities, and over her dead body the brother and sister swore to utterly exterminate her enemies.

Some years later Shainitza was grieving for the death of her favourite son, Aden Bey. So wild was her sorrow that she smashed with a hammer all his and her own diamond ornaments, burnt all her cashmeres and valuable furs, and forced his young widow to lie on straw mats spread on the ground instead of on a bed. The mirrors and ornaments of her serail were also destroyed, its windows were by her order painted black,[1] and everything which in any way recalled joy or happiness was banished from the palace. Roused from this abandonment of grief by the news of the fall of Gardiki,[2] she wrote to Ali reminding him of the oath they had sworn together over their mother's corpse, and of her wrongs and theirs, and urged him to have no mercy on the inhabitants of that town. "As for me," she added in conclusion, "it is only on cushions stuffed with the hair of the women of Gardiki that Shainitza will henceforward repose!"

Faithfully was the terrible oath, sworn to the dead, kept both by brother and sister. The chief men of Gardiki, to the number of some three hundred, induced by fair promises to meet Ali at the Khan of Valieré, were there ruthlessly massacred by the Christian troops under his Greek lieutenant, Thanasé

[1] See p. 265; and compare similar custom in folk-tale, p. 315.

[2] In 1802. A Greek folk-song graphically describes the gallant defence made by this town, which was taken by one of Ali's lieutenants, "Yousóuf the Arab" (*Greek Folk-songs*, p. 234).

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Vaghia,[1] not one escaping. Shainitza caused the town to be razed to the ground, and, after cutting off the hair of the women with every insult which she could heap upon them, this tigress in human form drove them forth with their children to the mountains, menacing any with a like doom who should venture to give food or shelter to the objects of her wrath. The traveller passing through the valley of Drynopolis may to this day see in the wall of the khan the tablet which records, in letters of gold, the number of the dead and the date of their sacrifice to the *manes* of the mother and the fury of the sister of the Vizier of Ioannina.

In a codicil to her will, Khamko directed that a *hadji*, or pilgrim, should be despatched on her part to lay offerings on the tomb of the Prophet, and pray there for the repose of her soul. Such pilgrimages and offerings may, however, only be made when the expenses are defrayed with money lawfully and honestly acquired. And as it was found on inquiry into the estate of the late Veli Bey, Ali's ancestor, that the property to be sold for this purpose had been taken by force or fraud from a Christian, the pilgrimage was disallowed by the religious authorities.

Such extreme ferocity of disposition as that manifested by Khamko and Shainitza is, however, exceptional among Albanian women, and even in Ali Pasha's

[1] The Greek poet, Aristotle Valaorites, has made Thanasé Vaghia the subject of one of his most striking poems, Ὁ βρυκόλακας, "The Vampire," a translation of which may be found in my *Greek Folk-songs*, p. 121. The tragedy of Ἡ κυρὰ φροσύνη, "The Lady Phrosyne," by the same writer, part of which I saw acted in an open-air theatre at Salonica, gives a vivid picture of Ali Pasha and his Court.

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own household was one whose character stands out in striking contrast to theirs. This was the Vizier's favourite wife, Emineh, the daughter of the Pasha of Delvino, a chieftain whose ruthless cruelty had gained for him the surname of the Tiger, but who had fallen a victim to Ali's ambition. In the dirges sung by the Liaps on the death of her husband, Emineh is described as "the gentle hind of Mount Pelagos," and her sympathy for the victims of the Vizier's rancour brought about her untimely and tragical end.

When the news arrived at Ioannina of the fall of Souli, Emineh, touched with the story of their heroism, fell at the Vizier's feet and implored his clemency on their behalf. "O Effendi!" she cried, clasping his knees, "deign to listen to thy most devoted slave, and be not insensible to her tears! Your Fate has warned me in a dream that it will be well for you if you spare the Souliotes!"

"The *Souliotes!*" exclaimed the Vizier, in a voice of thunder—"the *Souliotes!* Darest thou intercede for my worst enemies and not tremble for thyself?"

"Effendi," replied the brave woman, rising with dignified firmness—"Effendi, remember that I am the daughter of a Pasha. Yes, I dare intercede for them, and, moreover, dare to tell thee that their blood, and the blood of my unhappy father, which thou hast shed whilst I was yet a child, will be upon thy head!"

"And upon thine also," replied the Vizier, beside himself with fury. Drawing from his girdle a pistol, he discharged it at his wife, who, falling in a swoon, was carried by her slaves into the haremlik. Ali, think-

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159 175 562 ing he had killed her, and overcome with grief and remorse, shut himself up in his most private apartments until he was informed by his physician that Emineh was not even wounded, but had merely fainted from emotion. His mind thus relieved, Ali shed tears, and, with all his tenderness for his favourite wife revived, proceeded to her apartment. Admittance being from fear refused him, he entered the chamber by force. The noise, however, and the sight of the tyrant, gave to the tender Emineh a shock which proved fatal, and she expired during the night in a state of delirium.

The death of Emineh was a terrible shock also to her murderer. Her memory perpetually haunted him, whether at the festal board or in the council chamber, and, above all, in the silent watches of the night. He feared to be left alone, and was frequently heard by his pages to start up, and exclaim: "Emineh! it is she!—it is she! Save me from her vengeance!" Years later, when the Dervish Sheikh, Youssouf, while boldly reproving the Vizier for his crimes and cruelties, pointed out from the window the tomb of the murdered Emineh, he was interrupted by Ali, who exclaimed with tears: "Stop, stop, my father! Thou hast named the name of Emineh; overwhelm me not with the weight of thy maledictions!"

628 578 An account of the Albanian women would hardly be complete without some mention of the terrible blood-feuds (*Ram de Ghiak*), which, though often originating in the most trifling causes, result in great loss of life, and are frequently handed down from generation to generation. Sometimes these feuds

665 A new generation of political leaders now came forward, many of whom were to play an important part in this story. In the South, the Orthodox Bishop Fan Noli, with a group of returned emigrants from the United States, formed a party professing Radical principles. He met with some support, especially among the landless Orthodox peasantry, but his movement suffered from the difficulties of applying advanced Western political theories to tribal or feudal communities where the Ottoman tradition of government still prevailed. The Moslems of the South also formed a party, to which most of the Tosk beys adhered. Prominent among its leaders were Ali Klissura, Midhat Frasheri, and Mehdi Frasheri, who represented perhaps the most enlightened element among the Albanians, combining a Western education with practical experience of administration in the Ottoman civil service. Mehdi Frasheri indeed had been Governor of Jerusalem under the Turks, and was later to surprise his colleagues in the League of Nations Assembly by a speech on the Palestine Mandate such as they had scarcely expected from the Albanian delegate. In the North there were tribal factions rather than political parties. The leader of the Catholics was Jon Marko Joni, who had become Captain of the Mirdita in succession to Prenk Bib Doda and was for a time the protagonist of a Serbian inspired plan for the creation of an autonomous Mirdite Republic. Bairam Bey Tsuri and Tsena Bey Kryeziu, two hot-tempered guerilla leaders, contended for supremacy among the Moslem clans of the north-east, while Mustafa Kruya and Sufi Elezi
643 were paramount in Kruya and in Dibra. But the strongest man in the country, drawing his power, like Essad Pasha before him, from the fighting men of Mati and the rich landowners of Central Albania, was Ahmet Bey Zog.

643 Ahmet Zog was born in 1895 of a family of Mati Beys with
● 159 a long tradition of distinguished service to the Ottoman Empire. When he was but a boy his grandfather, Jemal Pasha, conspired with Marshal Rejeb Pasha to carve out an independent Albanian kingdom from the ruin of Turkish power in Europe. The Marshal was at the time in command of the Turkish armies in Tripoli and planned to sail to Albania with his best troops as soon as Jemal Pasha should raise the standard of revolt. But

1/ [After Paris Peace Conference, 1920 -- Analyst]

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Sultan Abdul Hamid, sitting in the Yildiz at the centre of his web of spies, got wind of the conspiracy. He dared not recall Rejeb Pasha or order his arrest; for he knew that the African army was loyal to the Marshal, and feared that such a move might provoke the very revolt which he wished to prevent. Instead he simulated a political crisis, and, dismissing his Divan, offered the Ministry of War to Rejeb. The Marshal accepted, confident that the secret of his conspiracy was well kept, and thinking perhaps that he could carry out his plans the more easily, once in control of the whole military machine of the Empire. He accordingly repaired to Stamboul, and, on his arrival, was summoned to an audience at the Yildiz. The Imperial Guard, an Albanian unit, was drawn up in his honour; and if he came with misgivings they must have been dispelled by the marks of confidence and affection with which the Sultan received him. From the Imperial presence Rejeb Pasha drove back to the capital and proceeded to the Ministry of War to take up his new functions. He was shown into his office, where obsequious secretaries lit his cigarette and brought him a cup of coffee. Of it he drank and died: the Sultan's agents had poisoned it.

The conspiracy was scotched, but it would have been no easy task for the Turkish authorities to have arrested Jemal Pasha Zog among the mountaineers of Mati. The Sultan, however, judged it politic to forget, and was content to have young Ahmed Zog brought to Stamboul as a hostage for his grandfather's loyalty. The old ruler took a liking to the boy and had him brought up in the palace and educated at the officers' school in the Galata Saray. He sent him for his holidays to Macedonia, the Crimea, the Caucasus, and Egypt — but never to his home — and even made him for a time one of his A.D.C.s. Thus at an early age Zog absorbed the principles of Oriental government, and learned from its greatest living exponent the art of playing off his enemies one against another.

When the Young Turks deposed the Sultan, Zog escaped through Macedonia to his home in Mati. He was still a mere boy, but he led his clansmen against the Serbs during the Balkan Wars, and on one occasion raided as far as the suburbs

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of Skoplje. In the first World War he made common cause with the Austrians, and, thanks to his influence in Mati, was made a colonel in the Albanian forces formed under their aegis. It was not long, however, before an incident, illustrative of the man's character, brought him into conflict with his allies. It had originally been agreed that the Albanian forces should march under their own national flag, but the Austrian authorities presently issued an order that they should fly instead the colours of the Dual Monarchy. Three Albanian officers resisted the change and were shot on the order of an over-zealous Austrian colonel. When Zog heard of their deaths, he arrested the first three Austrian officers he could lay hands on, and had them executed in reprisal. This action confronted the Austrian general commanding in Albania with a delicate problem: he could hardly overlook such a gesture of defiance, yet he feared to proceed against Zog lest by so doing he should alienate the men of Mati and other Albanians friendly to Austria. In the end the order concerning the colours was rescinded, and Zog was posted to the Imperial Headquarters: an appointment which amounted in practice to honourable confinement in Vienna. There he was kindly received by the old Emperor, and once again internment gave him the chance to learn something of the ways of another great Empire which had long played a leading part in the Balkans. Constantinople and Vienna were not, perhaps, bad schools for a future ruler of Albania.

As soon as the war was over, Zog returned to Albania and set about reorganising his faction. Despite his youth — he was only twenty-five in 1920 — he soon became the strongest single influence in the land and was the real power either in, or behind, the many governments that followed one another up to 1924. His authority derived from the rifles of the Gheg tribesmen and the money-bags of the Gheg *beys*; and it would seem that, in return for their support, he assigned to them a lavish share in the fruits of power. The preference thus shown to the Ghegs was a natural cause of discontent among the Tosks and combined with personal jealousies to create a revolutionary situation. Bishop Fan Noli joined forces with Ali Klissura and the

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643 Tosk *beys*, and won the support of Mustafa Kruya, the cunning
669 Gheg chieftain who swayed Kruya province. With considerable
[159] skill they isolated Zog from his supporters, and in 1924 seized power by insurrection and drove him across the border into Yugoslavia.

The conflict between Zog and Fan Noli has sometimes been characterised as a struggle for power between "conservatives" and "progressives"; but in this, as in almost all Albanian revolts, the division between the contending parties was one of geography and faction rather than of opinion or class. Much was offered to the masses in the programmes of both sides, but the practice in either case redounded chiefly to the advantage of the men in power. It will perhaps be sufficient comment on the policies of the Fan Noli regime to record the Bishop's own verdict on the causes of his failure: "By insisting on the agrarian reforms", he afterwards wrote, "I aroused the wrath of the landed aristocracy: by failing to carry them out I lost the support of the peasant masses".[1]

Zog meanwhile had been joined in Belgrade by Tsena Bey Kryeziu, the head of a powerful Jakova clan which could boast of having given fourteen Pashas to the Ottoman Empire. Tsena had a numerous following among the Albanians on both sides of the Yugoslav-Albanian border, as well as friends in high places in Belgrade. He now made common cause with Zog, and together they plotted a counter-revolution. Zog rallied round him a group of Albanian *émigrés*, and with their help prepared the tribes inside Albania for a rising. Tsena meanwhile, with the approval of the Yugoslav authorities, raised and trained an army of Kossovars, who were to form the spearhead of the revolt. The Yugoslav Government abetted the conspiracy as a means of increasing their influence in Albania: they supplied Zog and Tsena with money and with arms, and stiffened their tribal levies with veterans from General Wrangel's White Russian army, which was then concentrated in Yugoslavia. The Powers closed their eyes to these unneighbourly proceedings, and, in December of 1924, Zog and Tsena marched into Albania at the head of their Kossovar and Russian troops.

[1] Quoted by J. Swire in *Albania: the Rise of a Kingdom*, p. 444.

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by family ties to the tribesmen across the border and were thus exceptionally placed to smuggle arms, agents, or propaganda into Albania. Moreover, a force of Kossovars acting as the spearhead of the rising would not be resisted as an invasion but fraternally acclaimed as a liberating army. The support of the Kossovars were thus essential to our plans, but most of their leaders inclined towards the Axis Powers, who had promised to unite the region to Albania. Gani alone supported the Allies, so that the Kryeziu family became the natural rallying point for our movement. Indeed, long before we had come on to the scene, Gani had taken steps to organise those Albanians who had taken refuge in Yugoslavia in 1939 from the Italians. In response to Italian pressure, most of them had been confined to remote villages of Bosnia and Voivodina, but Gani provided for their needs and interceded in Belgrade on their behalf. The majority of these exiles were army officers and monarchists, and, although they were glad of Gani's help and money, they were naturally suspicious of the Kryezius as enemies of the King. Gani therefore suggested that, to make sure of their whole-hearted support, we should send to Turkey for Abas Kupi, the defender of Durazzo and the most popular of the monarchist leaders.

Abas Agha Kupi, or Bazi Sani as the tribesmen called him, could neither read nor write: indeed only with difficulty could he sign his name. Born in the nineties, he was, like Skanderbeg, a native of Kruya, where his father had been a respected member of the Bektashi community. One of his uncles had been a passionate Albanian nationalist and had fired the boy's imagination by tales of Turkish prisons and guerilla war. One day, when young Abas was but fifteen years old, nationalist insurgents seized Kruya and hoisted Skanderbeg's flag — the black eagles on the red ground — upon the castle tower. The boy went out to join them, but they told him that he was too young to fight and sent him home in tears. A few days later the town was reoccupied by "loyalist" troops under Essad Pasha, who at once gave orders to pull down the offending flag and restore the Star and Crescent. A soldier climbed on to the tower to carry out the order, but young Abas snatched up his

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father's rifle and shot the man dead. Astonishment or sympathy covered his escape; and he fled to the mountains to hide from Essad's revenge. The Pasha, however, was impressed by the boy's daring, and still more by the success with which he evaded or repelled his pursuers. He resolved to make use of him; paid the blood money for the soldier's death; and admitted Abas to his following. The young man thus became one of the "Essadist" leaders, and during the first World War raised a guerilla band with which he harassed the communications of the Austrian army. In the troubled times which followed the war he took sides with Mustafa Kruya against Zog and was declared an outlaw by the Tirana Government. For two years he defied the Zogist forces in the mountains of Kruya, until in 1924 Fan Noli and Mustafa drove Zog into exile and themselves seized power. Abas Kupi had set great hopes on the new regime, but they were disappointed; and when Zog and Tsena in their turn attacked the Government he refused to come to its help. Instead he remained in Kruya, a spectator of the civil war.

Zog had learnt to respect this illiterate guerilla genius, and, in the hopes that the poacher might turn gamekeeper, offered him the command of the Kruya region. Abas Kupi accepted and from that time became Zog's devoted lieutenant; nor were their relations darkened by the jealousy which, in politics, so often destroys the friendships of able men. Abas Kupi recognised that his ignorance barred him from the highest offices; and the king felt safe to reward the subject without fear of raising the rival. In Kruya, however, Abas ruled as dictator, untrammelled by the control of the Central Government. His administration was popular; and he preserved an exceptional degree of law and order in the district, mainly thanks to a private intelligence service, so widespread in its ramifications that he was often able to restrain potential malefactors by disclosing foreknowledge of their designs. It is said that, during the celebrations which attended the King's marriage, two visiting dignitaries — tribal chiefs from the North — were robbed in a Tirana café. Abas Kupi was informed and at once summoned the chief pickpockets of the city to his office. Within half an

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Fear stalked through the camp in these last days, but Abas Kupi remained calm to the end. His kindness to us was unfailing; and never by word nor deed did he betray any sign of resentment against his treatment by the British Command. He understood that we were his friends, and always spoke of "our defeat" as if to show that he still identified us with his cause. We had come to know him well during these seven months in which we had so often broken bread together and slept under the same roof, and our respect for him had only grown with intimacy. No man can be great from morning until night, but there was in Abas Kupi a power of leadership, a natural wisdom, and a generous temper which endured the searching test of daily scrutiny. Courage, cunning, energy, and patience are necessary qualities in a guerilla leader, but Abas Kupi's peculiar genius lay in his skill in manipulating men, and in the natural pragmatism of his outlook. He seemed to know just how far each man could be used, and had reduced to a fine art the methods of making others serve his purposes. He would appeal with more than feminine intuition to whatever was strongest or weakest in each individual; and so personal was his technique in these matters that he would never speak with more than one man at a time. Trusting seldom, he could seldom be betrayed; but, if suspicion prevented him from delegating authority, his achievements were perhaps the more remarkable in that he was alone the indispensable heart and nerve-centre of an otherwise invertebrate movement.

He might understand by intuition; he judged only by results; and indeed it often seemed to us that he was deaf to argument and blind to a man's intentions. Such objectivity was proof alike against the sentimental appeal of a demagogue, the scrupulous hesitations of a moralist, or the fine-spun controversies of professional politicians. It was perhaps the real secret of his power, and may explain how an illiterate and primitive tribesman could command the support of intellectuals and could defeat, through four long years, the wiles of a Mustafa Kruya and the casuistry of the missionaries of the Comintern. The soundest calculation, however, proceeds in the last analysis from some act of faith; and trust in British

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power was the first article in the Agha's creed. His desperate situation might suggest that he had been mistaken, yet he still believed that his defeat was only a temporary reverse.

In the long hours of waiting we spoke together more freely than in the past, and our conversations ranged beyond the daily problems of war and politics. The Agha's philosophy was simple and earthbound, and he told me once: "We make our own heaven or hell here, in this world." He regarded power as the greatest driving force in men's lives; for experience had taught him that its possession was the necessary condition of personal freedom and of all good or evil action. In the bitterness of defeat he blamed the weakness of his allies more than the malice of his enemies, but showed the same objectivity in his opinion of people as in his judgment of affairs. A deep distrust of human nature led him to view opponents and supporters with the same detachment, and to judge them solely by their proven records, or their qualities of companionship. Enver Hoja he despised as "a fool", but he spoke with respect of Ymer Dyshnitsa and Seifullah Maleshova, and always referred to Mustafa Jinishi as "my friend". Likewise he spoke with sympathy of Mustafa Kruya, his would-be murderer, and we were once astonished to hear him call Mark Joni Markai "a good boy". As a leader he deplored the fatal suppleness of the Ballist chiefs, but as an ignorant man he bowed before their erudition. He smiled at Muharrem's vanity, and, if his affection for Gani might sometimes seem tinged with jealousy, he often told us of the "brotherly kindness" with which Gani had received him in Belgrade. Gratitude is rare in politics, but, if the Agha could not always reward kindness, at least he never forgot it. He loved the way of life of the tribal anarchy, and deplored the rise to power of new men who had never known, and would not respect, its personal freedom and ancient code of honour. Yet even his regrets were tempered by an instinctive sense of historical proportion; and once, in a more philosophical mood, he told us:

"You know we Ghegs have exploited Albania for generations. Perhaps it is only right that the Tosks should have their turn."